

**Date:** 16.09.2020

**Time:** 7.30pm

**Service taken by:** Rev Gavino Fioretti

**Psalm (read):** 19:1-6 (Sing Psalms); 19:7-17 (Scottish Psalter)

**Reading:** Nehemiah 8:1-12

**Text:** 2 Timothy 3:16-17

**Outline: Sola Scriptura**

a) Introduction

1. Its root

2. Its meaning

3. Its reasons

4. Its implications

## **Sola Scriptura**

- **Introduction**

The cry *Sola Scriptura*, or scripture alone, has great importance from a time of great theological debate during the reformation. We've looked already at another of the vital statements, *grace alone* – it's not grace plus something else, but grace alone. It's *scripture alone* – not scripture plus more, but scripture alone.

We live in a time when there's thought to be no objective truth; everything is subjective and so the best we can do is grasp at our best understanding of truth, if it makes us happy. But we know that there's one divine, revealed truth – we must live our lives according to this truth.

### **1) Its root**

**The necessity of God's revelation:** We can't know God by ourselves. We're finite; He's infinite. We're sinful; He's holy. There's a gulf between us and Him we could not bridge. The only way for us to know God was for Him to make Himself known to us.

**The reality of God's revelation:** The hand of the Creator is seen in creation – this is a general revelation that we're told leaves people without excuse. But this is a limited revelation that doesn't tell us the gospel or about Christ. We'd never know the gospel unless God revealed it to us. The Bible

is the place where God has revealed Himself – we see Jesus and God through Him through scripture. It's important that we keep coming to scripture so that we can know God – it would be foolish to go elsewhere.

**The mercy of God's revelation:** God didn't need to reveal Himself to us. He didn't owe us anything. We don't deserve this mercy. This is God's mercy in revealing Himself to us through His Word. He reveals His truth in this – we must come to the place where God's mercy can be seen and known.

## 2) Its meaning

**The centrality of Scripture:** The Bible is the central, most important thing in the life and conduct of the believer. Without the Bible, we wouldn't know God's will or way. The Bible read and explained must be central to us. It should be at the very heart of every worship service.

**The authority of Scripture:** Scripture is the final, highest, only authority. It doesn't matter what men say, it's what God says that matters. It's the authority for our life.

**The necessity of Scripture:** You can be saved without a church building, seminary or denomination, but you can't be saved without the Bible. Without it, you wouldn't know what's right and what's wrong, that God is a triune God, why Jesus died, about the resurrection, about God's grace. The Bible is our spiritual food and drink – it gives energy and strength to the believer.

## 3) Its reasons

**Inspiration:** All scripture is God-breathed. It's the very breath of God. It's unique. Other books, teaching and conversations can help and edify us, but only the Bible is inspired. There can be a place for the wisdom of man, as long as it doesn't contradict the Bible. If we base our life on God's Word, we won't go wrong.

**Inerrancy:** We might be in error, our interpretation or translation can be in error, but God is without error and His Word is without error – it cannot be broken. The men who wrote the Bible weren't without fault, but the One leading them is without fault – He used their humanity, and what God was wanting said would be said. God has preserved His Word. His Word is not inconsistent as He is without error. You can't put anything else at its level – it's without mistake.

**Perspicuity:** The Bible is understandable. There are parts that are complicated and it's helpful to have someone help to explain what's being said. But even a child can understand the gospel. An uncomplicated Christian can know the Bible more than a theologian. Every Christian has the Holy Spirit within them, to give understanding. The Bible isn't a book for a few chosen – it's for everyone. The church's understanding of the Bible might at times be wrong, but the Bible is never wrong.

**Sufficiency:** All we need for eternity is in scripture. In Revelation, we read that there would be a curse to all who add or take away from the Bible. It is sufficient. We won't know all that we want to know, but all that we need to know is in the Bible. We need to know who God is and how to be reconciled to Him. We need to know Him as our Father and Saviour. He gives us what we need.

#### **4) Its implications**

What you believe and do should be in accordance with scripture. It's not what the world or even what the church says that should guide our decisions, but the Bible should be the only rule of faith in our life. If scripture shows us we've been doing wrong, we should repent and turn. A church must believe what the Bible says – the Bible is above the creeds, confessions of faith and church denominations. We won't understand perfectly what the Bible says, but we should try. A minister can be wrong, but the Bible never is. Be biblical in your theology, be faithful to God. The church is not free; we're God's servants and we're called to obey Him. Due to sin we can come to different conclusions, but don't rely on man's wisdom, but on God's. When we don't follow God's instructions, there are consequences. Any theological debates should be done in the light of the Bible, not whatever is convenient for an argument. The church is not a business; all plans should be in the light of scripture. Our mission is to proclaim Jesus. All of our conduct, practice, debates and our mission should be done in accordance with scripture. We need God's Word – we are privileged indeed to have access to it in our own language.